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Mindfulness for Behavioral Health Providers: Self Care & Clinical Practice

Not being in the present moment:

- Distracted
- Mind Wandering
- Doing vs Being

Tipping Points or Edge States:

- Pathological Altruism
- Burnout/Vital Exhaustion
- Vicarious Traumatization
- Workaholism

What is mindfulness?

- Concentration practice
- Rooted in Buddhist tradition
- Being present in the moment
- Monkey Mind

Metacognitive Awareness

- Helps us to see the habits of the mind
 - Grasping/clinging
 - Aversion/avoidance
 - Attachments
- Stories/Themes

- Experience and reaction are two things
 - First dart (what happens), second dart (interpretation) (Hansen)
 - Add-ons (Salzberg)
- It's about the experience to the experience
 - Experience pain differently (Kabat-Zinn)
 - Change relationship to _____
 - Nonjudgmental acceptance
 - Letting go
 - Reduce identification with emotional experience
 - Ability to sit with emotional experience

How does Mindfulness Help?

- Better executive functioning
 - Ability to focus, manage tasks, prioritize goals
- Less distracted
- Less fragmented
- Quicker responses to what is next (less clinging/grasping to what just happened)
- Improved immune response
- Increased somato-sensory perception
- Improved relationships

Wise Mind, Open Mind

- Mental stillness
- Grounded
- Accessing core resources

“Demons of Ego Mind”

Ronald Alexander

- Doesn't everyone desire happiness, joy, bliss, and peace? Then why are so many people stuck in unhealthy or unfulfilling jobs and relationships?

- Most people desire change, and even radical change, because their lives are out of sync with their most heartfelt longings. Yet, when they're faced with overwhelming evidence that it's time to move on, to let go of what was and enter into their deepest, or core, creativity, where all sorts of overlooked possibilities will begin to reveal themselves to them, they freeze in fear. Resistance takes over. To access their power to transform, they must start by exploring and dissolving their deeply rooted resistance to change.

- The first step in embracing your resistance is to identify it and also check if you have any hidden hindrances. Then it is important to understand the payoffs of resistance as these hold you back from moving forward.
- Demons of Ego Mind:
 - by resisting change, we can avoid the unknown.
 - we can avoid being judged as “strange.”
 - we can avoid failure.
 - we can also want to avoid success.
 - we can avoid feeling guilty.

Interior Time

- Finding balance
- Feeling grounded
- Emotional effectiveness
- Increase zone of resilience
- Recognize up-regulation and know when/how to down-regulate
- Move from attachment/reactivity to nonreactive equanimous response

Ways to practice Mindfulness

- Sitting meditation- grounding/settling
 - Breathing meditation (Salzberg)
 - Somatic meditation (from Halifax)
- Guided Meditations
 - Visual imagery & Antidotes (Alexander)
- Mindful awareness
 - Continual breathing awareness
 - Driving, washing dishes, eating, listening
- Mindful movement
 - Qigong
 - Walking

Compassion

- how to cultivate compassion: bring to mind the feeling of someone who loves you, while calling up heartfelt attitudes of gratitude or fondness. Then in your mind offer explicit wishes toward the person, such as “may you not suffer”, “may you find rest”, “may you be happy”.

- Every day try to have compassion for 5 types of people:
 - 1) someone you are grateful to
 - 2) a loved one or a friend
 - 3) a neutral person
 - 4) someone who is difficult for you
 - 5) yourself.

Mindful Presence

- In an interpersonal context, it is the embodiment of a warm accepting kindly compassionate presence without being possessive and without conditions that the client must meet to merit attention (Hick & Bien, 2008).

- Sunsets or Math Problems? Tendency to veer off from reflective listening to advice giving or consoling (Hick & Bien, 2008).

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